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ABSTRACT

This report of the Working Party to determine selection criteria for those research projects to be included in the EUDISED R & D data base provides for an agency in each participating country which will maintain a national Research and Development data base and submit information to the international data base. The system is expected to contain educational research carried out by universities and research organizations, educational research and development projects funded by government authorities and private foundations, and research oriented educational development projects. Both ongoing and completed research will be appropriate for the data base; dissertations and projects without a primary educational research orientation will be excluded. Appended is a list of Working Party participants. (STS)

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COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION

EUDISED PROJECT

REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON SELECTION CRITERIA FOR EUDISED R & D

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INTRODUCTION

The two Committees interested in creating a EUropean Documentation and Information System for Education in the field of research and development (EUDISED R & D) - the Committee for Educational Documentation and Information and the Committee for Educational Research - jointly set up a Working Party to determine selection criteria for EUDISED R & D. The names and addresses of its members are given in the Appendix. The Working Party held two meetings at the Council of Europe's Paris Office, the first on 30 November - 1 December 1976 and the second on 10-11 March 1977. The Working Party took into consideration the guidelines and selection criteria which were established for the 1970 European survey on educational research conducted by the Council of Europe (see document DECS/Rech (70) 15, paragraph 2) and those laid down for EUDISED R & D 1976 (see report on the meeting of national agencies, 25-26 May 1976, document DECS/Rech (76) 23, paragraphs 6 and 7). Furthermore, the article by one of its members on criteria for a catalogue of educational research (Cardinet, Jean; Schmutz, Madeleine. Critères pour un catalogue des recherches pédagogiques. In: Paedagogica Europaea, 1976, 1) served as a basis for discussion. At the final meeting the first issue of the EUDISED R & D Bulletin 1976 was available to participants.

The Working Party submitted the following recommendations to the two Committees concerned. The recommendations were drafted by the Working Party's Rapporteur, Mr. J. G. Morris, HMCI, Scottish Education Department.

Furthermore, the Secretariat, on the advice of the Working Party, commissioned from the Rapporteur a background study on the current state of educational research and its uptake in Europe. The study will be distributed to the addressees on the mailing-lists of the committees concerned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

National agencies

1. These recommendations are addressed to the national agencies or units which by national decision will provide information on educational research and development in the countries participating in EUDISED R & D.

2. It is recommended that there should be one national agency per country. Depending upon the national situation this national agency may be composed of regional units or of specialised units, eg a unit dealing with projects directly funded by ministries and other official bodies and another unit dealing with research carried out at the universities.

Data bases

3. The information collected by the national agency in the country in question will constitute the national data base whether it is computerised or not. Eventually all national data bases should be computerised. At present, the first computerised data bases in this field have been established in Austria, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The information exchange between computerised national data bases will take the form of exchange of tapes: the national tapes, validated at the national level, should be merged into the EUDISED R & D data base by a central agency acting under contract to the co-ordinating international agency; copies of these merged tapes should be distributed to all national agencies so that the EUDISED R & D data base will be available at each node in the network. Various services and publications can then be generated from the system, either by the central agency or by national agencies acting on behalf of all other agencies. At present, the information exchange is carried out by the national agencies completing manually EUDISED R & D worksheets which are edited at the Council of Europe's Documentation Centre for Education in Europe and processed by

INSPEC/PPL under contract to the Council of Europe. From the EUDISED R & D data base which is thus constituted, a print-out in the form of film pages is produced which serves for offset printing the EUDISED R & D Bulletin. It is the only service at present provided by the system.

4. The distinction between the national data bases, the EUDISED R & D data base and the services/publications derived from them has been regarded by the Working Party as fundamental for its considerations and recommendations. Since the national agencies establish the national data bases which are then merged into the EUDISED R & D data base, responsibility for data collection rests with them; they may apply any criteria of selection which they deem to be appropriate in their national context. However, there must be co-ordination among national agencies with regard to their national selection policies by applying agreed guidelines to ensure the coherence of the data base. The following recommendations of the Working Party are intended to prepare such agreements.

Ongoing and completed research

5. It is recommended that information collected by national agencies should cover both ongoing and completed projects of educational R & D in the year in question. Those few countries which do not yet collect information on completed projects should begin to do so as soon as possible to align themselves with the practice of other agencies. This would mean that a project would usually be reported on twice: first as an ongoing project and, then, when it is completed.

Complete information

6. Project information given on a worksheet should be complete. The worksheet should comprise an abstract which gives details, at least of aims and methods in the case of an ongoing project, and,

in addition, of results and publications, if appropriate, in the case of a completed project. It is recommended that only those projects on which complete information is available should be entered into the EUDISED R & D data base: incomplete information is of little value for any of the services/publications to be generated from that base.

Doctoral theses

7. A doctoral thesis as such should normally not be entered into the EUDISED R & D data base as there are at present already two international repertories of such theses, apart from the national repertories. A doctoral thesis which is part of a project could, however, be listed on the worksheet in the field reserved for publications and be mentioned in the abstract. Theses of Ph.D. or equivalent level (Habilitationsschrift, doctorat d'état, etc.) which the national agency considers to be of particular importance, may be entered into the EUDISED R & D data base. It is recommended that national agencies should apply these guidelines rigorously.

Scope of the system

8. There has always been agreement among all concerned that the system should cover:

- educational research carried out by universities and equivalent institutions, and by specialised research organisations/institutes independent of universities;
- educational R & D projects directly funded by ministries, local education authorities, official bodies such as research councils, and private foundations;
- educational development projects, if they contain an inbuilt research element and if researchers participate in them.

The Working Party endorses these criteria.

9. However, as there is in all information systems an increasing danger of "over-information" the Working Party recommends that the following additional guidelines be applied by national agencies as far as possible:

- "Borderline cases". There are numerous projects concerning linguistic, sociological, medical and political science research, etc. If such projects have not been carried out within the educational field (ie pupils/students/learners not constituting the sample) or do not seem to have relevance for education, they should not be entered into the national data base or - if this has been done for particular national reasons - should not be transferred to the EUDISED R & D data base.

- All R & D projects to be entered into the EUDISED R & D data base, should add new elements to existing knowledge.

- Certain R & D projects, in particular in the field of educational statistics and administration, are of national interest, but their general interest for other countries may be doubtful. Such projects may be entered into the national data base but not into the EUDISED R & D data base. However, if a new methodology which is of general interest has been used in the project, the national agency in question may also enter it into the EUDISED R & D data base.

- Preference should be given to a complete coverage of policy-oriented research and in particular projects concerned with reform and innovation.

10. The Working Party examined whether there were general criteria allowing for a degree of quality control within the system. Various definitions of what constitutes "good research" were discussed. However, the Working Party was unanimous in concluding that research must remain open to new paradigms which may lead to new approaches and perspectives and that plurality of value systems is essential to education. The possibility of a quota system was also discussed

through which every participating country would be given a number of projects which it must not exceed. Another suggestion was for a multinational selection committee with full powers to accept or reject what was offered. Both proposals were held to be inappropriate for international co-operation in this field.

Services and publications

11. The Working Party agreed that the selection criteria determining whether a project should be entered first into the national data base and, second, into the EUDISED R & D data base, depend on the services/publications to be generated from each of these bases. The national data base will tend to aim at complete coverage to be able to respond to all information needs at the national level. The EUDISED R & D data base must be selective to ensure that the services and publications derived from it are of major interest to users and readers all over Europe. The matter of which services and publications might be offered by the system was discussed in detail. The results of this discussion which are listed below, should be understood as suggestions by the Working Party for possible future development without claiming in any way to have exhausted this matter.

- Current awareness lists of educational R & D projects could best be issued at the national level. They should be published at regular intervals and list the projects recently entered into the national data base. They may also contain projects on which no complete information is available at the date of publication.

- Annual national surveys of educational R & D. These could be generated from national data bases provided that they are computerised. The EUDISED R & D data base could provide annual surveys of the national projects processed in the course of the year; this might be of particular interest to countries which report their projects in a language other than their own.

- EUDISED R & D Bulletin. This publication generated from the EUDISED R & D data base, need, in principle, not report on each project entered into the base. It should be a European synopsis of important and well-described projects of both ongoing and completed research and thus be of interest not only to researchers and librarians, but also to administrators in ministries and local authorities, to the inspectorate, to teacher trainers and to politicians interested in education. Subscriptions should be on a commercial basis as from the 1977 series onwards. The national agencies should examine whether to elect an editorial board to define the publication policy of the bulletin and to supervise the editorial work.

- Cumulations. It would be possible to publish from the EUDISED R & D data base various cumulations, eg general indexes and indexes for a specific field covering several years, ad hoc bibliographies of publications resulting from completed projects in specific fields.

- Searches and selective dissemination of information (SDI) services. Such facilities can be offered by the central agency and, as soon as the EUDISED R & D data base is available at each national agency, they could also be provided in a decentralised way. The system will reach its full impact only when such services, after an experimental period, have become well established.

- Microfiche and hard copy services. As most of the publications resulting from completed projects form part of report series produced by institutes and, therefore, can be difficult for a foreigner to obtain, it is essential to examine now how a microfiche and hard copy service may be set up by the central agency.

- Workshops. The EUDISED R & D data base will comprise some 900 projects by May 1977 when the projects reported under the 1976 procedure have been processed. The base will

increase in volume as the subsequent contributions are entered. This will make it possible to detect, in particular by means of the bulletin, those researchers who have provided a particularly interesting contribution to research and development in a specific field and to convene them for workshops of the kind that have so far been organised by the Council of Europe. In future, such workshops might be of interest to all international organisations co-operating in the EUDISED project and to national authorities interested in relevant foreign experience.

- Trend reports. The Council of Europe has already commissioned and published several European trend reports on educational research fields. The authors had certain difficulties in detecting the relevant material in the various European countries, and the fields and periods to be covered were in certain cases too large. In future, the EUDISED R & D data base and, in particular, the bulletin will make it possible to commission reviews of educational research and development in well determined fields and for shorter time periods.

12. The problem of selection criteria cannot be separated from the kind of services and publications which will be offered from the national data bases and the EUDISED R & D data base: what is to be entered into a base will be determined both by the availability of the data and by the use to be made of them. At present only a few such services exist, eg the EUDISED R & D Bulletin and the series of national surveys which cover the period since 1971 and which are published about every second year. As further publications and services come into being, the question of guidelines for the selection of projects will have to be re-examined. The Working Party recommends that provision for such re-examination be made in due course.

APPENDIX
ANNEXE

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LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

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